**Using the Dictionary**

Dictionaries list words in alphabetical order. They are useful for looking up the word spelling, pronunciation, history, and meanings.

The oldest dictionary discovered is over 4000 years old. The earliest English dictionary, however, was published just 400 years ago in 1604. What does this tell you about the English language?

*Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

An useful resource is your dictionary. In this lesson you will review how to use a dictionary.

**The first dictionary skill you will review is alphabetizing word lists.**

**1.** Put the following groups of words in alphabetical order.

**a.** brook, dodge, artist, stone, make

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**b.** dab, dip, den, dub, dot

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**c.** bought, botulism, border, bottom, bounce

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**The next dictionary skill you will work on is using guide words. Guide words appear at the top of the page and indicate the first and last word on the page.**

**2.** Circle all of the following words that would be included on a dictionary page headed by the guide words *fascinating* and *fatally*?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| fashion |  | farther |  | fastener |  | fatality |  | fat factual |
| fuel | fatal | fasten | fascination | fast fore |

**3.** Cross out the following words that would not be included on a dictionary page headed by the guide words *fascinating* and *fatally*?

REMEMBER:

Dictionaries usually list only the basic forms of words with no endings added. Therefore, to find words such as playing and played, you may have to look under the basic form of the word (play).

Intelligent Tiger bedroom four famous ideas

Question fix faster family playground Glendale

**4.** Find the dictionary entry for the word *transfer*.

REMINDER: Not sure what plural means? Get into a good habit, look it up!

**a.** Give two other forms of the verb *transfer*.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

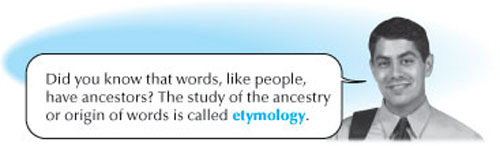
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**b.** Give two other forms of the noun *transfer*.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**5.** Find the dictionary entry for the word emporium. What are the two plural forms for this word?

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Dictionaries give the etymology of English words. They also give the meanings of many Latin and Greek roots, prefixes, and suffixes.**

**6.** Find the meaning of each of the following Greek roots. Then give an example of an English word created from that root.

**Where do words come from:**

Many of the English words you use today were borrowed from other languages. For example, the following English words were borrowed from Aboriginal languages: *moccasin, moose, muskrat, parka, pecan, skunk, squash,* and *toboggan*.

Many words have interesting stories behind them. Three examples are the words *pants, denim,* and *jeans*.

* In the late sixteenth century, trousers were called *pantaloons* after Pantalone, a stock character in Italian comedy theatre. Over time the word *pantaloon* was shortened to *pants*.
* *Denim*, the name of one of the most popular fabrics today, comes from the French expression *serge de Nï¿½mes*. Nï¿½mes was a manufacturing town in southern France where the fabric was made in great quantities.
* *Jeans* were named for the Italian town of Genoa, called *Genes* in old French. Genoa was famous for a sturdy, twilled cotton cloth, much like denim.

You will discover that many English words were created from Latin and Greek words. For example, the English words *video, evident, television,* and *vision* were created from the Latin verb *videre* (to see) and its past participle *visus*. The English words *telescope, telephoto, telephone,* and *telecast* were created from the Greek *tele* (far).

a. Bio: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Example: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. Geo: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Example: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

c. Graph: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Example: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

d. Photo: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Example: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**7.** Consider the entries in questions 4 and 5.

**a.** Give the etymology of the word *transfer*. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**b.** Give the etymology of the word *emporium*. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Homographs:**

A dictionary entry can have several meanings, but each meaning is closely related to its etymology.

Most dictionaries provide distinct entries for **homographs** and number each of these entries.

For example, consider the word *barb*.

* Barb1 comes from the Latin *barba*, which means beard. Barb1 refers to one of the slender, whisker-like structures extending from the head of certain fish, such as catfish.
* Barb2 comes from *Barbary*, the Muslim countries west of Egypt on the northern coast of Africa. Barb2 refers to a breed of horse introduced by the Moors from northern Africa into Spain; barbs resemble Arabians and are known for their speed and endurance.

Notice that barb1 and barb2 are pronounced the same. Other homographs are pronounced differently. For example, consider the entries for *bow*.

* Bow1 means bend forward. The word rhymes with how.
* Bow2 means a weapon for shooting arrows. The word rhymes with snow.
* Bow3 means the forward part of a ship. The word rhymes with cow.

Bow1 and bow3 are pronounced alike. Bow2 is pronounced differently.

**8.** Find the dictionary entries for the word *riddle*.

**a.** Are the homographs pronounced the same way? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**b.** Explain how the meaning of each homograph is related to its etymology.

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Before you can locate a word in the dictionary, however, you must have some notion of how to spell the word. This can be especially difficult when a word begins with a consonant that is not pronounced or when it begins with two consonants that are pronounced like another consonant. The following chart has helpful information about possible letter combinations for an initial sound.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Initial Sound of Word** | **Letter Combinations** |
| **K** | k (kilt) c (cat) ch (chorus) |
| **F** | f (fast) ph (phrase) |
| **S** | s (sail) c (ceiling) ps (psychology) |
| **J** | j (jam) g (gem) |
| **N** | n (now) gn (gnaw) kn (know) pn (pneumonia) |
| **R** | r (rip) wr (wrap) |

When you’re not sure of the spelling of a word, think about its beginning sounds. Decide what the likely spellings are for these sounds. Next open the dictionary to words beginning with these likely letters. Run your finger down the entries for a possible match. When you find one, check the pronunciation and meaning to make sure it is the word you want. You may have to repeat this process several times.

**9.** The inclusion of **homonyms** in a dictionary will help you find a desired word when you are unsure of the spelling. Give a homonym for each of the following words.

a. Kernal = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ e. Blue = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. Alter = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ f. Gnu = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

c. Sear = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ g. There = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

d. Hall = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ h. Weather = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**10.** Dictionaries will provide alternative spellings for words. Give an alternative spelling for each of the following words.

a. colour \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ c. traveler \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. organize \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ d. centre \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In this lesson you reviewed how to check the spelling of words in a dictionary. As you work through this course, keep a log of personal spelling words. You can list the words in your spelling log under the following headings:

* words you frequently misspell
* words you frequently confuse, such as the homonyms *there* and *their*
* words you have read or heard and would like to use in your own writing
* words that follow certain spelling patterns

|  |
| --- |
| **DID YOU KNOW?** |
| English spelling and pronunciation can be tricky. For example, the letter combination *ough* can be pronounced in many different ways as the following words illustrate:   * rough and enough (rhyme with *puff*) * though and dough (rhyme with *toe*) * plough and bough (rhyme with *cow*) * through and slough (rhyme with *clue*) * cough and trough (rhyme with *off*) * hiccough (rhymes with *cup*) |

**Lesson Glossary**

**entry:** each word explained in a dictionary

**etymology:** study of word origins

**guide word:** a word that appears at the top of each page or column in a reference book, such as a dictionary, to indicate the first or last entry on the page

**homographs:** words that have the same spelling but different origins, meanings, and sometimes pronunciation

**homonyms:** words that are pronounced the same but have different spellings and different meanings

**prefix:** the part on the front of a root word

**root:** the basic part of a word

**suffix:** the part on the end of a root word